

Evaluation of Summer Area Programs

1. Do you feel that this type of area program can contribute to increasing analyst effectiveness?

There is general agreement that this type of area program can be valuable in contributing to increased analyst effectiveness. There is also general agreement that this particular course was of value, to a greater or lesser degree, but that it could have been of much greater value had certain factors been different. The values gained are said to be in the nature of background material acquired, new approaches introduced, thought stimulated, and understanding deepened. Whether the information was new or in the nature of review, it aided in increasing the accuracy of judgments and in providing a common fund of knowledge of the area. It also provided an opportunity for further reading, for acquiring the 'flavor' of an area, and for expert guidance in problem-solving. One of the lecturers and also a branch chief agreed that the program was of value.

However, for the group in R and S building, many of these advantages were lost or decreased by the accommodations for the lectures, which were given in a hot, stuffy, poorly ventilated and illuminated, windowless room; at an hour late in the afternoon in the middle of the summer heat. The folding chairs became uncomfortable during the 2-hour sessions. Attendance grew very poor, due to many factors such as the heat and heat dismissals, work piling up in the offices, boredom, etc., and caused some disappointment and embarrassment. It was felt that a better classroom an earlier hour, and required

attendance, since the lectures were continuous, would greatly increase the benefits of the program. The course for this group had great potential but failed to live up to it completely.

STAT Another group of comments came from a whole branch who attended the USSR Area Program in [redacted]. Here there were few or no comments on accommodations, except folding chairs, which grew uncomfortable. The feeling here was that although the trend toward a broadening of knowledge is good, this particular series of lectures was not of great value to them. The program didn't help those working with scientific or Technological problems. The presentation was rather general, it was felt, and a further breakdown into the more specific topics of political science and economics would have been of more value and relevance to actual work problems than a series on, say, history. It was felt that history was stressed at the expense of some other more necessary things.

2- Do you feel that this particular program was useful to you?

Most of those who attended the lectures in R and L building felt that the program was useful to them personally, although a few who went as alternates naturally didn't benefit as much as they probably would have had attendance been regular. Most considered the background knowledge gained as the most valuable factor, although several stated that there was too much background material and not enough current information presented.

In the group in [redacted] most agreed

that the program was of value. However, one said it was of value personally, but not enough to justify all the time spent; he thought the course should have been more integrated, correlated, and unified. Another said the course was irrelevant to him because it wasn't scientific and technical.

III. 2. Content and scope of subject matter.

Over half of those in the R and S groups who commented on the program agreed that most of the lectures were relevant to their needs and desires, although most of those added that the subjects might have been even more relevant had there been less historical background and more current information given. This was a general criticism, being the main point of those who thought the content was not relevant. One person said that some redundancy and unnecessary material could have been eliminated by better coordination among the lecturers. Another person said that the scope of the South-east Asia program was too ambitious, that either this should be narrowed or else the length of the program extended. Also, a separation of specialized and non-specialized persons into different sections would add to the relevancy and interest of the lectures to both groups.

According to the group, some of the lectures were not accurate or advanced enough for those highly specialized; others were too much advanced for those not specialized. Some wanted more facts, less theory; they said the lectures were too general and abstract.

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Several thought the emphasis should have been on economics rather than history. It seemed to some as if the lecturers weren't aware of the backgrounds or work of their listeners.

III - b. Manner and method of presentation

In general the manner and method of presentation of the lectures were considered satisfactory. However, almost all those attending suggested a future division into two groups, one for specialists, with opportunity for considerable discussion; and another for non-specialists, with emphasis on the lecture technique. This would add to value and interest and decrease embarrassment. It was also suggested that there be a concentration of lectures on one subject until it is covered, rather than alternating various subjects. One person stated that there was some discouragement because the scheduled program of lectures was not covered. It was felt that occasionally there was too much detail presented in the lecture. Several persons commented that the lectures seemed poorly organized. A couple of individual comments were that one lecturer had an unrealistic approach, and ~~that~~ the lecture-technique of the speakers was criticized by a former teacher.

III c. Time allotted for course.

Most people seemed to feel that sufficient time was spent on the program and that the two-hour sessions were satisfactory. However, quite a few, particularly in the South-east Asia Program, felt that the time was inadequate,

and suggested extending or even doubling it. It was regretted that this particular area program didn't run 6 weeks as scheduled. The group thought at least two more weeks could have been spent on Soviet politics. STAT

By far a majority liked the 2-hour sessions. Those who didn't were in R and S building, and they thought the heat and stuffiness of the room, the discomfort of the chairs, and the pressure of office work piling up were the reasons, rather than the actual length of the lectures. Some of these people suggested the lectures be given in the morning rather than late afternoon, and preferably not during the summer.

There were several suggestions as to different or better timing and number of lectures per week: a) One suggested 2-hour lectures, 3 times weekly, for from 8-10 weeks; b) another suggested two 4-hour morning periods, as causing less disruption of normal work routine. Another idea was to separate the 2-hour period into one hour for lecturing and the other for discussion.

III d. Satisfactory balance between lecture and discussion?

About half of those who answered the questionnaire thought there was enough discussion during the course, and the other half felt that there was not enough. Several said that discussion should be kept to a minimum because certain people always tend to dominate with their own ideas. Six persons said they favor having certain periods devoted entirely to discussion of selected problems, but several thought there was no need

for such periods.

Several suggestions were made concerning discussion: that there should be more discussion for advanced groups, on subjects self initiated; and lectures only for the elementary group, with opportunity for questions, of course. It was thought by one that if lecturers were from the agency, and all in the room had top clearance, more current problems could be discussed. One suggested that discussion might be encouraged by requiring some outside reading. At times the difference in experience and training of the students made discussion difficult.

IV Approval or disapproval of policy of not requiring collateral reading and papers?

Almost everyone agreed that the policy of not requiring outside reading and papers should be continued. However, almost everyone thought that some reasonable reading for background and supplement would be very desirable and useful, but that the time involved in writing papers would not be justified in such a condensed course. Two or three believed that a reasonable amount of reading and papers should be required; while one thought limited reports and exams would add to incentive and value. But in this case the course should not be compulsory. Everyone agreed that a suggested reading list should be distributed.

V Additional comments.

Many persons thought the course should be completely voluntary. But it was also thought that persons who enter such a program should

certain flaws in his history.

was generally considered

be required to attend regularly, as the lectures were continuous. There was quite a bit of embarrassment at the small attendance, both among students and lecturers. One person felt attendance should be compulsory, so that student specialists could contribute to the discussion.

One suggestion was made that if any agency experts could be induced to lecture in such courses, the salaries of the consultants could be saved.

Another is that a different sort of set-up for the course be planned: this might include the use of a syllabus containing an outline of the proposed course, Tables, charts + explanation of basic significance, and a bibliography. Class hours would be spent in supplementary lecture and discussion-seminars.

It was also suggested that the topics of the lectures be announced beforehand, so that those who wish to attend may plan ahead of time.

Some specific comments on the individual lecturers are as follows:

In the R and S group, [redacted] who spoke on culture and religion in south-east Asia, and [redacted] on political history, were considered excellent. [redacted] on economics could have been more basic and general; and [redacted] on geography, was too detailed.

In the [redacted] group, there were mixed comments on [redacted]; some considered him generally good, and others said he was too unrealistic, used too much generalization and was too facile. The advanced students found certain flaws in his history.

to be very stimulating and valuable. He had realistic approaches and insight. But a few thought him too advanced and hard to understand, and he repeated some history already given by

STAT should have spent more time on Russian economics and less on American, it was felt; and he included too much detail.

It would seem, then, that reception on the whole was quite favorable, but that perhaps for the amount of trouble and expense all around, the results, in the way of increased knowledge and understanding, were not as good as might have been hoped.

Unfavorable criticism centered especially around room accommodations, for one group; attendance, for the same group; and separating the experienced from the non-experienced. It was generally felt that the lecture material could have been better integrated and coordinated, to present a unified picture and eliminate repetition; that history was emphasized at the expense of economics and political science; and that more current information would have been of greater value.